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I served thee, England, fifty years in jars,  
And pleased thy princes in the midst of wars;  
Here where I'm placed I'm not; and thus the case is,  
I'm not in both, yet am in both the places. 1621.

He that judgeth me is the Lord.—1 Cor. iv.  
Let him who stands take care lest he fall.

Harris remarks, that the Roman Catholics of his diocese have a tradition that he returned to his original faith previously to his death, and that though it was pretended that he was buried in his own cathedral, yet he had given private orders for burying his body elsewhere, to which circumstance, as they say, the two last lines of his epitaph allude. "But," says Harris, "although he was no good man, and had impoverished his see by stripping it of much of its ancient estate, yet I do not find any room to call his sincerity as to his religious profession in question, living or dying. These lines rather seem to hint at the separate existence of the soul and body." But however this may be, there is another tradition relative to him less doubtful, inasmuch as it is common to the peasantry of different creeds, namely, that he was the handsomest man in Ireland in his day!

The Castle of Termon, like most edifices of the kind erected in the sixteenth century, consisted of a strong keep with circular towers at two of its angles, and encompassed by out-works. It was battered by Ireton from the neighbouring hill in the parliamentary wars; but its ruins are considerable, and by their picturesqueness add interest to the northern shore of the lower Lough Erne. P.

## THE IRISH MIDWIFE.

BY WILLIAM CARLETON.

Introductory.

OF the many remarkable characters that have been formed by the spirit and habits of Irish feeling among the peasantry, there is not one so clear, distinct, and well traced, as that of the Midwife. We could mention several that are certainly marked with great precision, and that stand out in fine relief to the eye of the spectator, but none at all, who in richness of colouring, in boldness of outline, or in firmness and force, can for a moment be compared with the Midwife. The Fiddler for instance lives a life sufficiently graphic and distinct; so does the Dancing-master, and so also does the Match-maker, but with some abatement of colouring. As for the Cosherer, the Shanahie, the Keener, and the Foster-nurse, although all mellow toned, and well individualized by the strong power of hereditary usage, yet do they stand dim and shadowy, when placed face to face with this great exponent of national temperament.

It is almost impossible to conceive a character of greater self-importance than an Irish Midwife, or who exhibits in her whole bearing a more complacent consciousness of her own privileges. The Fiddler might be dispensed with, and the Dancing-master might follow him off the stage; the Cosherer, Shanahie, Keener, might all disappear, and the general business of life still go on as before. But not so with her whom we are describing; and this conviction is the very basis of her power, the secret source from which she draws the confidence that bears down every rival claim upon the affections of the people.

Before we introduce Rose Moan to our kind readers, we shall briefly relate a few points of character peculiar to the Irish Midwife, because they are probably not in general known to a very numerous class of our readers. This is a matter which we are the more anxious to do, because it is undeniable that an acquaintance with many of the old legendary powers with which she was supposed to be invested, is fast fading out of the public memory; and unless put into timely record, it is to be feared that in the course of one or two generations more, they may altogether disappear and be forgotten.

One of the least known of the secrets which old traditional lore affirmed to have been in possession of the Midwife, was the knowledge of how beer might be brewed from heather. The Irish people believe that the Danes understood and practised this valuable process, and will assure you that the liquor prepared from materials so cheap and abundant was superior in strength and flavour to any ever produced from malt. Nay, they will tell you how it conferred such bodily strength and courage upon those who drank it, that it was to the influence and virtue of this alone that the Danes held such a protracted sway, and won so many victories in Ireland. It was a secret,

however, too valuable to be disclosed, especially to enemies, who would lose no time in turning the important consequences of it against the Danes themselves. The consequence was, that from the day the first Dane set foot upon the soil of Ireland, until that upon which they bade it adieu for ever, no Irishman was ever able to get possession of it. It came to be known, however, and the knowledge of it is said to be still in the country, but must remain unavailable until the fulfilment of a certain prophecy connected with the liberation of Ireland shall take away the obligation of a most solemn oath, which bound the original recipient of the secret to this conditional silence. The circumstances are said to have been these:—

On the evening previous to the final embarkation of the Danes for their own country, the wife of their prince was seized with the pains of childbirth, and there being no midwife among themselves, an Irish one was brought, who, as the enmity between the nations was both strong and bitter, resolutely withheld her services, unless upon the condition of being made acquainted with this invaluable process. The crisis it seems being a very trying one, the condition was complied with; but the midwife was solemnly sworn never to communicate it to any but a woman, and never to put it in practice until Ireland should be free, and any two of its provinces at peace with each other. The midwife, thinking very naturally that there remained no obstacle to the accomplishment of these conditions but the presence of the Danes themselves, and seeing that they were on the eve of leaving the country for ever, imagined herself perfectly safe in entering into the obligation; but it so happened, says the tradition, that although the knowledge of the secret is among the Irish midwives still, yet it never could be applied, and never will, until Ireland shall be in the state required by the terms of her oath. So runs the tradition.

There is, however, one species of power with which some of the old midwives were said to be gifted, so exquisitely ludicrous, and yet at the same time so firmly fixed in the belief of many among the people, that we cannot do justice to the character without mentioning so strange an acquisition. It is this, that where a husband happens to be cruel to his wife, or suspects her unjustly, the Midwife is able, by some mysterious charm, to inflict upon him and remove from the wife the sufferings annexed to her confinement, as the penalty mentioned by holy writ which is to follow the sex in consequence of the transgression of our mother Eve. Some of our readers may perhaps imagine this to be incredible, but we assure them that it is strictly true. Such a superstition did prevail in Ireland among the humbler classes, and still does, to an extent which would surprise any one not as well acquainted with old Irish usages and superstitions as we happen to be. The manner in which the Midwife got possession of this power is as follows:—It sometimes happened that the "good people," or *Dhoine Shee*—that is, the fairies—were put to the necessity of having recourse to the aid of the Midwife. On one of those occasions it seems, the good woman discharged her duties so successfully, that the fairy matron, in requital for her services and promptitude of attendance, communicated to her this secret, so formidable to all bad husbands. From the period alluded to, say the people, it has of course been gladly transmitted from hand to hand, and on many occasions resorted to with fearful but salutary effect. Within our own memory several instances of its application were pointed out to us, and the very individuals themselves, when closely interrogated, were forced to an assertion that was at least equivalent to an admission, "it was nothing but an attack of the choleric," which by the way was little else than a libel upon that departed malady. Many are the tales told of cases in which midwives were professionally serviceable to the good people; but unless their assistance was repaid by the communication of some secret piece of knowledge, it was better to receive no payment, any other description of remuneration being considered unfortunate. Some of those stories have been well told, and with others of them we may probably amuse our readers upon some future occasion.

From this source also was derived another most valuable quality said to be possessed by the Irish Midwife, but one which we should suppose the virtue of our fair countrywomen rendered of very unfrequent application. This was the power of destroying jealousy between man and wife. We forget whether it was said to be efficacious in cases of guilt, but we should imagine that the contrary would rather hold good, as an Irishman is not exactly that description of husband who would suffer himself to be charmed back into the arms of a

polluted wife. This was effected by the knowledge of a certain herb, a decoction of which the parties were to drink nine successive times, each time before sunrise and after sunset. Of course the name of the herb was kept a profound secret; but even if it had been known, it could have proved of little value, for the full force of its influence depended on a charm which the Midwife had learned among the fairies. Whether it was the *Anacampteros* of the middle ages or not, is difficult to say; but one thing is certain, that not only have midwives, but other persons of both sexes, gone about through the country professing to cure jealousy by the juice or decoction of a mysterious herb, which was known only to themselves. It is not unlikely to suppose that this great secret after all was nothing more than a perverted application of the Waters of Jealousy mentioned by Moses, and that it only resembled many other charms practised in this and other countries, which are generally founded upon certain passages of Scripture. Indeed, there is little doubt that the practice of attempting to cure jealousy by herbs existed elsewhere as well as in Ireland; and one would certainly imagine that Shakspeare, who left nothing connected with the human heart untouched, must have alluded to the very custom we are treating of, when he makes Iago, speaking of Othello's jealousy, say,

"Look where he comes! not poppy nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou hadst yesterday."

Here it is quite evident that the efficacy of the "syrups" spoken of was to be tried upon the mind only in which the Moor's horrible malady existed. That Shakspeare, in the passage quoted, alluded to this singular custom, is, we think, at least extremely probable.

We have said that the Midwife stood high as a matchmaker, and so unquestionably she did. No woman was better acquainted with charms of all kinds, especially with those that were calculated to aid or throw light upon the progress of love. If for instance young persons of either sex felt doubt as to whether their passion was returned, they generally consulted the Midwife, who, on hearing a statement of their apprehensions, appointed a day on which she promised to satisfy them. Accordingly, at the time agreed upon, she and the party interested repaired as secretly as might be, and with much mystery, to some lonely place, where she produced a Bible and key, both of which she held in a particular position—that is, the Bible suspended by a string which passed through the key. She then uttered with a grave and solemn face the following verses from the Book of Ruth, which the young person accompanying her was made to repeat slowly and deliberately after her:—

"And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

"Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

If at the conclusion of these words the Bible turned, she affirmed, with the air of a prophetess, not only that the affection of the parties was mutual, but that their courtship would terminate in marriage. If, on the contrary, it remained stationary, the passion existed only on one side, and the parties were not destined for each other. Oh, credulous love! not to see that the venerable sybil could allow the Bible to turn or not, just as she may have previously ascertained from either party whether their attachment was reciprocal or otherwise! We dare say the above charm is seldom resorted to now, and of course this harmless imposition on the lovers will soon cease to be practised at all.

The Midwife's aid to lovers, however, did not stop here. If they wished to create a passion in some heart where it had not previously existed, she told them to get a dormouse and reduce it to powder, a pinch of which, if put into the drink of the person beloved, would immediately rivet his or her affections upon the individual by whose hands it was administered. Many anecdotes are told of humorous miscarriages that resulted from a neglect of this condition. One is especially well known, of a young woman who gave the potion through the hands of her grandmother; and the consequence was, that the bachelor immediately made love to the old lady instead of the young one, and eventually became grandfather to the latter instead of her husband. Indeed, the administering of

philtres and the use of charms in Ireland were formerly very frequent, and occasionally attended by results which had not been anticipated. The use especially of *cantharides*, or French flies, in the hands of the ignorant, has often been said to induce madness, and not unfrequently to occasion death. It is not very long since a melancholy case of the latter from this very cause appeared in an Irish newspaper.

The Midwife was also a great interpreter of dreams, omens, auguries, and signs of all possible sorts, and no youngsters who ever consulted her need be long at a loss for a personal view of the object of their love. They had only to seek in some remote glen or dell for a briar whose top had taken root in the ground; this they were to put under their pillow and sleep upon, and the certain consequence was, that the image of the future wife or husband would appear to them in a dream. She was also famous at cup-tossing; and nothing could surpass the shrewd and sapient expression of her face as she sat solemnly peering into the grounds of the tea for the imaginary forms of rings, and love-letters, and carriages, which were necessary to the happy purport of her divination, for she felt great reluctance to foretell calamity. She seldom, however, had recourse to card-cutting, which she looked upon as an unholy practice; the cards, as every one knows, being the only book on which the devil says his prayers night and morning. Who has not heard of his *prayer-book*?

We are now to consider the Midwife in the capacity of a woman not only brimful of medicinal knowledge, but possessed of many secrets, which the mere physician or apothecary could never penetrate. As a doctress, she possessed a very high reputation for all complaints incident to children and females; and where herbal skill failed, unlike the mere scientific man of diplomas, she could set physical causes and effects aside, and have recourse at once to the supernatural and miraculous.

For instance, there are two complaints which she is, beyond any other individual, celebrated for managing—that is to say, headache, and another malady which is anonymous, or only known to country folk by what is termed "the spool or bone of the breast being down." The first she cures by a very formal and serious process called "measuring the head." This is done by a ribbon, which she puts round the cranium, repeating during the admeasurement a certain prayer or charm from which the operation is to derive its whole efficacy. The measuring is performed twice—in the first instance, to show that its sutures are separated by disease, or, to speak more plainly, that the bones of the head are absolutely opened, and that as a natural consequence the head must be much larger than when the patient is in a state of health. The circumference of the first admeasurement is marked upon a ribbon, after which she repeats the charm that is to remove the headache, and measures the cranium again, in order to show, by a comparison of the two ribbons, that the sutures have been closed, the charm successful, and the headache consequently removed. It is impossible to say how the discrepancy in the measurement is brought about; but be that as it may, the writer of this has frequently seen the operation performed in such a way as to defy the most scrutinising eye to detect any appearance of imposture, and he is convinced that in the majority of cases there is not the slightest imposture intended. The operator is in truth a dupe to a strong and delusive enthusiasm.

When the Midwife raises the spool of the breast, the operation is conducted without any assistance from the supernatural. If a boy or girl diminishes in flesh, is troubled with want of rest or of appetite, without being afflicted with any particular disease, either acute or local, the Midwife puts her finger under the bone which projects over the pit of the stomach, and immediately feels that "the spool of the breast is down"—in other words, she informs the parents that the bone is bent inwards, and presses upon the heart! The raising of this precisely resembles the operation of cupping. She gets a penny piece, which she places upon the spot affected, the patient having been first laid in a supine posture; after this she burns a little spirits in a tumbler in order to exhaust the air in it; she then presses it quickly against the part which is under the penny piece; and in a few moments, to the amazement of the lookers-on, it is drawn strongly up, and remains so until the heart-bone is supposed to be raised in such a manner as that it will not return.

The next charm for which she is remarkable among the people, is that by which a mote is taken out of the eye. The manner of doing this is as follows:—A white basin is got, and a jug of the purest water; the midwife repeatedly rinses her mouth with the water, until it returns as pure and clear

as when she took it in. She then walks to and fro, repeating the words of the charm, her mouth all the time filled with the water. When the charm is finished, she pours the water out of her mouth into the clean basin, and will point out the mote, or whatever it may have been, floating in the water, or lying in the bottom of the vessel. In fact, you could scarcely mention a malady with which the Midwife of the old school was not prepared to grapple by the aid of a charm. The tooth-ache, the cholera, measles, childbirth, all had their respective charms. The latter especially required one of a very pithy cast. Every one knows that the power of fairies in Ireland is never so strong, nor so earnestly put forth, as in the moment of parturition, when they strive by all possible means to secure the new-born infant before it is christened, and leave a shangeling in its stead. Invaluable indeed is the midwife who is possessed of a charm to prevent this, and knows how to arrange all the ceremonies that are to be observed upon the occasion without making any mistake, for that would vitiate all. Many a time on such occasions have the ribs of the roof been made to crack, the windows rattled out, the door pushed with violence, and the whole house shaken as if it would tumble about their heads—and all by the fairies—but to no purpose: the charm of the midwife was a rock of defence; the necessary precautions had been taken, and they were ultimately forced to depart in a strong blast of wind, screaming and howling with rage and disappointment as they went.

There were also charms for the diseases of cattle, to cure which there exist in Ireland some processes of very distant antiquity. We ourselves have seen elemental fire produced by the friction of two green boughs together, applied as a remedy for the black-leg and murrain. This is evidently of Pagan origin, and must have some remote affinity with the old doctrines of Baal, the ancient god of fire, whose worship was once so general in Ireland.

Of these charms it may be said that they are all of a religious character, some of them evidently the production of imposture, and others apparently of those who seriously believed in their efficacy. There is one thing peculiar about them, which is, that they must be taught to persons of the opposite sex: a man, for instance, cannot teach a charm to a man, nor a woman to a woman, but he may to a woman, as a woman may to a man. If taught or learned in violation of this principle, they possess no virtue.

In treating of the Irish Midwife, we cannot permit ourselves to overlook the superstition of the "lucky caul," which comes so clearly within her province. The caul is a thin membrane, about the consistence of very fine silk, which covers the head of a new-born infant like a cap. It is always the omen of great good fortune to the infant and parents; and in Ireland, when any one has unexpectedly fallen into the receipt of property, or any other temporal good, it is customary to say "such a person was born with a 'lucky caul' on his head."

Why these are considered lucky, it would be a very difficult matter to ascertain. Several instances of good fortune, happening to such as were born with them, might by their coincidences form a basis for the superstition; just as the fact of three men during one severe winter having been found drowned, each with two shirts on, generated an opinion which has now become fixed and general in that parish, that it is unlucky to wear two shirts at once. We are not certain whether the caul is in general the perquisite of the Midwife—sometimes we believe it is; at all events, her integrity occasionally yields to the desire of possessing it. In many cases she conceals its existence, in order that she may secretly dispose of it to good advantage, which she frequently does; for it is considered to be the herald of good fortune to those who can get it into their possession. Now, let not our English neighbours smile at us for those things until they wash their own hands clear of such practices. At this day a caul will bring a good price in the most civilized city in the world—to wit, the good city of London—the British metropolis. Nay, to such lengths has the mania for cauls been carried there, that they have been actually advertised for in the Times newspaper.

Of a winter evening, at the fireside, there can be few more amusing companions than a Midwife of the old school. She has the smack of old times and old usages about her, and tastes of that agreeable simplicity of manners which always betokens a harmless and inoffensive heart. Her language is at once easy, copious, and minute, and if a good deal pedantic, the pedantry is rather the traditional phraseology and antique humour which descends with her profession, than the peculiar property or bias of her individual mind. She affects

much mystery, and intimates that she could tell many strange stories of high life; but she is always too honourable to betray the confidence that has been reposed in her good faith and secrecy. In her dress she always consults warmth and comfort, and seldom or never looks to appearance. Flannel and cotton she heaps on herself in abundant folds, and the consequence is, that although subject to all the inclemency of the seasons both by night and day, she is hardly ever known to be sick. The cottage of the Midwife may in general be known by the mounting-stone which is beside her door, and which enables her without difficulty or loss of time to get on horseback behind the impatient messenger. The window of her bedroom is also remarkable for its opening on hinges like a door, a thing not usual in the country. This is to enable her to thrust forth her well-flannelled head without any possible delay, in order to inquire the name of the party requiring her aid, the length of journey before her, and such other particulars as she usually deems necessary. The sleep of the Midwife is almost peculiar in its character to herself. No person sleeps more soundly and deeply than she does, unless to a knock at the door or a tap at the window, to both of which it may be said she is ever instinctively awake. We question if a peal of cannon discharged at her house-side would disturb her; but give on the other hand the slightest possible knock or tap at either her door or window, and ere you could imagine she had time to awaken, the roll of flannel that contains her head is thrust out of the window.

Having thus recited everything, so far as we could remember it, connected with the social antiquities of her calling, and detailed some matters not generally known, that may, we trust, be interesting to those who are fond of looking at the springs which often move rustic society, we now close this "Essay on Midwifery," hoping to be able to bring the Midwife herself personally on the stage in our next, or at least in an early number.

## GLIMPSES IN THE MOUNTAINS.

BY COUL GOPPAGH.

WHAT can have become of the old world I remember long long ago—almost twenty years ago? It is a weary look backward, and the distance hides it. This is not the world I was born in. I remember when the old men used to show me the ways they walked in, scores of years before, and the very corners and the footpaths through the fields. Here they met an old friend—there they took shelter from a storm. On this lake they skated all day—from that hill they saw the ships returning with victory from foreign war. Men walked quietly together then in silence or friendly talk, and did not jostle each other from the way; they went to bed and rose as the sun did; they followed in their fathers' ways—read the same books, laughed at the same fine old jokes, and believed their posterity would do the same. Old men then wore grey hairs, and saw their children's children, and were venerable. But they are all gone; and could they look out of their graves (if indeed their very graves be spared), they would not know the old world they used to live in.

It is all changed now with us old fellows of five-and-twenty. We are left doting among the ruins of our youth. There is nothing left to us of our early days. The old crooked grassy byeways where we went to gather blackberries and idle away a summer day, have been gone over by the surveyor's chain, and some straight cut, with prim, bare fences, has run it down. The little stream has been piped over, and, where it "babbled o' green fields," is a noisy, muddy thoroughfare. Over the green glen where the hazels nourished their brown clusters, strides a cursed viaduct; the execrable railway has frightened the linnet from the boughs, and a bird's nest shall never more be found. In the lonely bay where we used to gather shells, thinking ourselves in fairy land, and wondering what lay beyond the dim horizon, the steamboat roars and splashes. Riot and swearing and slang and vice of cities have usurped the quiet haunts of country calm and charity.

It is for a coming age all these things are preparing: to us is allotted only the vexation and bewilderment. I have no associations to link me to these horrors, and I prefer the old repose to all the luxuries they bring. What is it to me that I can go to East or West in so many days sooner, or even if the sun that sets on me to-night should rise for me to-morrow by the Ganges? Here is my "fortunate isle;" this is my home where my heart is. I have no business with Egypt or the Nile. I wish to sit undisturbed by my own fireside, to